

**Committee on Student Promotions and Professional Standards**

TO: Members, Committee on Student Promotions and Professional Standards

FROM: N Katz, MD (Chair) *NK*  
J David, MD *JD*

DATE: March 27, 2006

Re: MEETING AGENDA

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**□ Michael Tyberg**

Michael appeared before this Committee, most recently, in December of 2005. Shy a quorum, that group's recommendation that Michael be dismissed was carried over to the next Committee meeting, which took place 23 January 2006. The December recommendation "to dismiss" was endorsed by a quorum in January, setting the stage for today's meeting, to which Michael comes making his appeal-to-the-Committee.

Michael's academic schematic is included as attachment #1-a (he has failing scores in excess of eight formal exams); his Dec 2005 written statement to this Committee is attachment #1-b; his clerkship evaluation in Family Medicine is #1-c; and two faculty letters of support are attachments #1-d, e. A further written statement is attachment #1-f.

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**□ Rachelle Frankel**

Rachelle's academic schematic is enclosed as attachment #2-a, noteworthy for her record of accumulated exam failures. She failed three exams in the mid-year period of the 2004-2005 academic year, and as the year came to a close she failed three more. As is described in her written statement to the Committee, clinical issues had supervened by this time. She sought professional help, with good results, by her own report. The details of this period of personal difficulty are best left to Rachelle's accounting – her written statement is attachment #2-b. In addition, her Year I make-up exam schedule was complicated by a long-anticipated and postponed "honeymoon/vacation."

During 2005-2006, Rachelle continued on a full-time Year II schedule, until encountering additional difficulties. Additionally, Rachelle's track record was characterized by numerous invitations to meet with several Office of Education staff which went for the most part unanswered (attachment #2-c). She comes today for her required appearance, on the basis of her academic record.

Name: **Michael Tyberg**Date of Matriculation: **August 2002**Date: **3/24/06****Year 1 - 2002/2003**

|  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <u><b>Histology:</b></u><br>Exam 1 <b>F 53.7</b><br>Final Grade: <b>F 54.7</b><br>Make-up <b>P 65</b>  | <u><b>Anatomy:</b></u><br>1. Pass 2. Pass 3. <b>F 61</b><br>Unit #3 : Pass<br>Final Grade: PASS | <u><b>CV Phys:</b></u><br><b>P 64.3</b>                      | <u><b>Renal:</b></u><br>Exam 1 <b>F 64</b><br>Exam 2 <b>F 56.6</b><br>Final Grade <b>F 53.4</b><br>Make-up - P 96 |
| <u><b>MCFM:</b></u><br>1. <b>P 65.3</b> 2. P 80.9 3. P 86.2 4. P 75.9 5. <b>F 59.5</b> 6. <b>P 67.8</b><br>Final Average: 72.4<br>Make-up - <b>F 64.1</b> MUST REPEAT UNITS: 4, 5, 6 | <u><b>Dis Mech:</b></u><br>P 82.1   | <u><b>Pharm:</b></u><br>Exam 1 <b>P 69.4</b><br>Final P 89.2 |   |
| <u><b>ICM: Intro to Patient</b></u><br>PASS  | <u><b>ICM: Clinical Experience</b></u><br>PASS  | <u><b>Preventive Medicine:</b></u><br>PASS                   |   |

**Year 2 - 2003/2004**

|  |                                |  |  |
|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <u><b>MCFM:</b></u><br>4. P 75.9 5. <b>F 64.9</b> 6. P 88.1<br>Final Average: 76.1<br>Make-up - P 78.3 | <u><b>GI/Liver</b></u><br>P 79 |  |  |
| <u><b>Endocrine</b></u><br>P 78.8  | <u><b>Repro</b></u><br>P 69    | <u><b>Pulmonary</b></u><br>Exam 1 - 12/19/03 (excused*)<br>Exam 2 - 2/2/04 (excused*)<br>Final<br>M/U - Did not sit<br><b>WITHDREW</b> | <u><b>Hematology</b></u><br>Exam 5/5/04 <b>F - 0**</b><br>M/U P 78 |

**Year 3 - 2004/2005**


|   |   |   |                                    |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <u><b>Nervous System/HB</b></u><br>Exam 1 P 79.3<br>Exam 2 P 80.8<br>Final P 78.3 | <u><b>CV Med</b></u><br>P 72.4  | <u><b>Pulmonary</b></u><br>Exam 1 P 77.3<br>Exam 2 P 76.4<br>Final Grade P 76.7 | <u><b>Parasitology</b></u><br>P 82 |
| <u><b>ICM: Clinical Examination</b></u><br>P 89.0                                 | <u><b>Micro</b></u><br>Exam 1. P 78<br>Exam 2. P 86<br>Exam 3. P 94.2<br>Final Grade P 87.5 | <u><b>Rheum</b></u><br>P 77.1   |                                    |

\* Conflict w/MCFM exams, requested permission to take make-up

\*\* 5/11/04 - e-mailed Dr. David, requested permission to take make-up - illness

**ATTACHMENT**# 1-9

***Year 4 - 2005/2006***

|   |                                       |  |  |  |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| <b><i>Step 1</i></b><br> | <b><i>Family Med</i></b><br>High Pass |  |  |  |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|

**ATTACHMENT**  
# 1-9

***CSPPS***

March 6, 2006 - Scheduled  
January 23, 2006  
December 19, 2005  
November 15, 2005 (reviewed only)

14K+KG  
DEC 2005

This past October, the night before my presentation for the Family Medicine clerkship, I received the news that I had missed the Step 1 by one point. In spite of this devastating news, I still managed to give a presentation that generated very good feedback. I was able to do this because the past year had taught me how to put aside emotions and focus on my job. The high pass I earned was anticlimactic, but the wonderful experience that working in the Williamsbridge clinic gave me fuels my constant drive to succeed in becoming a great doctor.

It is with trepidation that I venture to discuss the events that led to my failures in the year 2002/2003. A medical student is not afforded the luxury of excuses; he is expected to succeed. I place the brunt of responsibility for not rising to these demands upon my own shoulders. I believe in integrity and consistency and just as I accept the credit for my accomplishments, so too I step up to the plate and willingly accept the constructive criticism of my superiors and my peers.

I welcome this committee to examine with meticulous detail my case. Just as AECOM has invested in me an invaluable education and painstakingly molded the form of a future doctor, so too I will utilize our meeting as a contribution to the final product of who I will be as a doctor. Our experiences mold who we are and there is no one that I would wish more than yourselves, this distinguished committee, to be the kiln that gives a soft malleable mold the strength, resilience and maturity to face the challenges of a medical doctor; to live up to the great name that Albert Einstein College of Medicine stands for.

It is incumbent upon me to revisit the events from the time of my acceptance into this renowned institution up until the first time that I appeared before this Board a year and a half ago. A review of past events will assist in the integration of all the facts into a big picture. Once the picture is clear, it is easier to recognize what needs to be corrected so that the errors of the past will not be repeated. September 2002 was a tumultuous time that was not the ideal atmosphere one would wish upon any beginner medical student. My grandmother suffered a debilitating stroke that left her left side paralyzed. My mother took a leave of absence from work to move in with my grandmother, my parents hired a full time nurse, and I transferred my residence from Einstein to Brooklyn to offer weekends and some nights to her care. Of all her family I am my grandma's favorite and my presence was a light in her eyes every Saturday. The toll that this extracted from my test preparation was enormous.

After a number of months, while my grandmother was thankfully on her road to recovery, a new and exciting time was introduced into my life; I began the courtship of my future wife. The drain on my study time and the emotional distraction took a terrible toll on my concentration, affected my studying and negatively impacted my test scores. When I focused, I mustered energy and revealed my potential; a high pass anatomy score and an MCFM score of 75.9, an 80.9, and 86.2 on two other MCFM exams, a 96 on a renal makeup, and an 89.2 on pharmacology.

A student incapable of the mastery that AECOM demands could not have achieved those scores. In fact it was these very successes that goaded me on to believe that I would restore the Michael Tyberg that I had always known and that my ambitions and goals would be realized. Every body is born with innate talents and I always prided myself on using my intellect and drive to excel; I was always an outstanding student; the dean of students at Touro College, my alma mater, made me the poster boy of Touro College as he proudly circulated my picture in international newspapers.

The pattern of successes and failures of 2002.2003 reflect a student struggling with a completely new set of circumstances that introduced failure when previously there had only been success. When the year came to a close I was left with a number of failures and one of them, the

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ATTACHMENT 3/27  
1-b



biochemistry course, had to be repeated. Dr. David emphatically suggested that I decelerate and I agreed. I welcomed deceleration as a chance to enable my wife and I to live in Brooklyn for the first year of our marriage while my wife completed her Bachelors of Psychology at Brooklyn College. Her job was in Brooklyn as well and we felt confident that with this arrangement and her support I would be able to fulfill my duties as a student.

In truth the merit of this plan of action was substantial and there was marked improvement in my handle of the material. The grades of that year of 2003/2004 reflect that; the 67.8 of protein metabolism of the previous year was turned into an 88.1 when it was repeated, a 79 in GI, and a 78.8 in endocrine. In fact the ratio of passes to failures in the year 2002/2003 of tests taken was 2:1 with 5 out of the 15 passes as a low pass. Contrast this to the year of 2003/2004 with a ratio of 7:1 and every pass as a high pass. It is not a coincidence that the first exam given just a couple of weeks after I was married was the only one that I failed. The electrically charged emotions of two newlyweds adjusting to one another made it difficult to focus on the lectures and conferences. I think that every person in this room who has experienced marriage with its ups and downs will testify on my behalf that this is not an unusual. With foresight I withdrew from the pulmonary course to channel all my energy into the topic of carbohydrate metabolism, but without the insight lectures or the four points from conference I received a 64.9 out of a possible 96 points.

Words do not describe the regret I feel for letting my foremost priority of studying be eclipsed by personal issues. It is a common mistake that many doctors learn too late in their careers with sad results. Hence my only consolation from my string of failures is that I was taught this lesson before anyone suffered harm. I can honestly say that the ups and downs of marriage did not disappear, nor did other familial responsibilities since then. Nevertheless I balanced my responsibilities with grace and always placed my studies at AECOM on the top of my list. Since February of 2004 I have passed every exam that I have taken in AECOM. I did not allow previous failures to distract me from my focus. Nor did these setbacks ever cause me to wander from my calling of medicine. The role of a healer to my patients is who I am and that will never change.

There remains one final incident in the year 2002/2003 that I would like to clarify before we can move past the time frame of the last Board meeting; the Hematology exam. My course-load was uncomplicated with Hematology as my sole responsibility and I was sufficiently prepared to do well on the exam, as I proved on the make-up. Unfortunately I fell ill on the night before the exam and did not feel well enough to sit for the exam. Aware that I had up to two make-up exams per year, I elected not to risk a chance of failure due to a transient illness, and I opted to take a makeup. However, I did not realize that I must send in an email to be excused from the exam and I received a failing grade for not showing up. In a way this was an outgrowth of taking make-ups for failed exams in my first year; I had forgotten that the procedure is different for a missed exam. I berate myself and hold myself responsible for not becoming as familiar as I should have with the by-laws. Please do not compare this with the heinous crime of a no-show on the wards. When there are patients that depend on you there is no automatic Plan B that magically appears when you disappear. I had the privilege of completing the Family Medicine clerkship and my reliability of attendance at the Williamsbridge family practice was impeccable; on most nights I stayed well into the evening. This dependability cannot be separated from being a good student or being a good doctor. My dependability is a trait that has served me in good stead in both my personal and my academic life.

During our last meeting the members of this Board gave me the chance to prove that I would bring about a lasting change. I promised this committee that I would change my residence back to ALCOM housing and so I did. I promised this committee that I would attend every lecture

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and conference and I did. I promised that I would utilize every resource that AECOM had to offer and I kept my promise and sought a tutor for every single course that year. Your trust in me was not in vain because, most importantly, I promised this committee a student who would master the material above all other considerations and I came through on that promise as well.

Let us look at the facts. There were 14 examinations left to complete the basic sciences. The ratio of passes to failures was 14:0 and all the exams were high passes. There were no withdrawals or make-ups or points missed from a conference. I would like to point out that in December 2004 I started to take the regular coursework of an accelerated student; Cardiovascular Medicine, Pulmonary, and ICM. What's more is that during that time, I found out that my wife and I were expecting our first child. If I had failed an exam at this point then I would be forced to admit that I had not learned the lessons of the past and that perhaps I am not able to juggle life and all of its surprises. There is no better testament to my ability to do so than to showcase this period of time. I balanced my personal and academic responsibilities with maturity. I mastered the skills of prioritizing and of time management. I weathered the stresses of my wife's pregnancy with ease and I showed great improvement as is evidenced by the last year's solid grades.

What remains now is a discussion of the failure of the USMLE Step 1. The USMLE was a struggle for me from the outset. I had already learned that advice from fellow students about test preparation is a road fraught with danger, yet my resources were limited. There was no syllabus to rely on that the information was contained therein, there were no conferences, no tutors, and no study partners. Based on information and advice I received from other students, I selected First Aid for the Boards as my primary syllabus, so to speak, the Board Review Series as a supplement to fill out the details, and Q-Bank. I used these tools to study and I also purchased a book called 'How to prepare for the USMLE' and found some very sound advice. The same author had written a book 'How to be a successful medical student' that I read after I failed biochemistry and their good advice had helped me pass all my exams since then. In fact I gave my copy of the latter book to Dean David because I felt it had made such an impact on my study methods. My last step in preparation was to make sure that I could devote some time to my almost due wife and Dean David offered that I could start rotations on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

An old study partner of mine from college days, Chaim Brown, was in a D.O. school in Las Vegas and he expressed an interest in spending the summer studying for the USMLE with me. I thought I would benefit from an intense one-on-one study partnership than join Kaplan. However due to unforeseen circumstances Mr. Brown was unable to come to New York. By that time I was locked out of the Kaplan live lectures. Mr. Brown and I, however, still studied on the phone at night and during the day I followed an intense schedule of study and questions.

Approximately a week before my test date I took an evaluation test given by the NBME and my score was 4 points below passing. I asked myself what was missing and lecture material stood out as the most obvious. Kaplan offers online lectures and I found them to be so insightful that, after the Dean gave me an extension till September 12<sup>th</sup> to start clerkships, I spent all day listening and reviewing these lectures. The week before the exam I reviewed all of First Aid and all the lecture material. Although it seemed that this degree of added instruction of the material went well beyond 4 points, I had made a mistake. I can honestly say that the news of my failure impacted my wife as hard as it did me. Although she had just given birth to our son, Ben, nevertheless her support for my studying never wavered. For example, she would stay during the week with her family so that I would not be distracted. We both however always remained optimistic about the future because we know that the most valuable things in life are what you work hardest for.

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SPR- 0091




So now I stand before you with the failure of the USMLE behind me, but I also now have an experience of a different world of studying. I joined the Kaplan live lecture course and immersed myself in an intense schedule of 9 hours of lecture time with syllabi. Finding a study partner was easy. The first person that I called from their bulletin board, Agatha Mann, became my study partner every night after lectures. We also listen to the lectures on video for a second time. I see the results in how my Q-Bank score has increased and in how my grasp of the knowledge has undergone an integration that is reminiscent of the AECOM courses I took in 2004/2005.

It should also be considered that the USMLE exam is unique in its own right. The material that is being tested stretches across multiple disciplines, delves into each of them richly, and integrates them into one science. Questions are not the classic one step associations I was accustomed to; three and sometimes four steps are required. Also the time factor, which was never an issue in an exam in Einstein, played a role. I submit to you that I what I am also guilty of is underestimating this examination. Part of what Kaplan trained me to do is to look and understand how the questions and multiple-choice answers are written and how to answer them directly. Hindsight is 20/20 and I see now with the right tools I could have conquered this challenge and I did not. It is those words "I could have" that haunt me and give me the impetus to face this challenge again and surmount it.

Lastly I would like to share with this Board my plan for future success. It is a simple one: to repeat the achievements of the past. I will spend a month of study preparing for the shelf examination before I even start each of the clerkships. I will utilize lectures at Kaplan as well as study partners and Q-Bank. Not only will this mean that my free time during the rotation will be spent reviewing, but the quality of my patient care will be enhanced as well. The clerkships are a tough challenge, but I recognize the need for me to put in the extra time and effort so that I may succeed in them as well.

Ladies and Gentleman of the Board, each of you views being a doctor as something intrinsic to the very fabric of your being. In the same spirit, I mentioned earlier that the role of a healer to my patients is who I am and that can never change. Esteemed members of the Board, I am humbled to come before you today to solicit each and every one of you to allow me to continue here at Albert Einstein on the path of actualizing the potential of who I am and of who I can become. If I am awarded the opportunity to continue my studies at AECOM, I promise I will not disappoint your faith in me.

Thank you,

  
Michael Tyberg

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3/22

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Clerkship Start: 09/12/2005  
 Clerkship: Family Medicine

End: 10/08/2005  
 Site: MMG-Williamsbridge FP



Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University  
**EVALUATION OF CLINICAL PERFORMANCE AND PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES**

Student: Mr. Michael Tyberg

Family Medicine - Class of 2007 - Rotation #4

☒ Required ☐ Elective

Clerkship Rotation

**OBSERVED CLINICAL EXAM:** (Please see instructions on reverse side.)

OCE Evaluation: Michael interviewed an elderly woman with multiple symptoms. He has excellent interpersonal skills and was very respectful. He elicited the patient's perspective and asked the relevant medical history and important psychosocial questions. The physical exam was appropriate. Evaluation: Satisfactory (5/7)

**ATTACHMENT**

# 1-b

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A Unable To Assess N/A Not Applicable

**PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES**

EXHIBITS COMPASSION, ADVOCATES FOR HIS/HER PATIENTS.

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

RELIABILITY, ATTENDANCE

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

WILLINGNESS TO "PITCH IN" AND HELP OVERALL CLINICAL EFFORT.

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

ABILITY TO BRIDGE POTENTIAL BARRIERS OF RACE, SOCIAL CLASS, AGE, RELIGION, GENDER, SEX, ORIENTATION, ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE, MENTAL CAPACITY, ETC.

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

WILLINGNESS TO ELICIT AND RESPOND CONSTRUCTIVELY TO FEEDBACK

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

OVERALL INTERPERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

1 Unsatisfactory 2 Marginal 3 Satisfactory 4 Outstanding 5 6 Outstanding 7 U/A N/A

**NARRATIVE SUMMARY:** (Please see instructions on reverse side.)

Mr. Michael Tyberg was a pleasure to work with. He had a kind, compassionate manner which was appreciated by patients. He asked good questions and took initiative to read about and follow up on patients seen. Michael's ability to synthesize information in oral and written presentations improved over the rotation. Evaluation: High Pass

In case based teaching, Michael answered questions when asked directly which makes it difficult to assess his knowledge or preparedness for the group/cases. Unfortunately, his presentation came last when we had little time so we did not get a chance to give feedback to him as a group. His case presentation of his patient was adequate. Michael was very polite but his reluctance to respond spontaneously does effect his learning/group participation. Evaluation: Pass

Community Based Project: COPC. Michael conducted a comprehensive community mapping of his health center site by himself. A project of this scope usually involves two or more students. Michael's critique of an article related to his project was well organized and raised some interesting methodological questions. The oral presentation contained an excellent introduction on what is COPC. It clearly connected the demographics to the COPC framework. Evaluation: High Pass

Michael achieved a score of 29/50 on the Family Medicine clerkship exam. The class mean was 39.

Overall Evaluation: High Pass

**OVERALL GRADE FOR THE ROTATION:**

1 Fail 2 Low Pass 3 Pass 4 High Pass 5 6 Honors 7 (Other) (Explained above)

Site Director Signature  
 Department Director Signature  
 If revised by Site Dept. Signature

Date  
 Date  
 Date



12/19/05

Jimmy,

When I returned to the office, I was uneasy with my role in the promotions committee today. I went not as a representative of the family medicine clerkship but as a family medicine doctor who has had close contact since the beginning of September and on discussions revolving his community project. The questions that came forward regarding the requirements and grading during the clerkship were not criteria that I was prepared to speak about. When I came back to the office I felt the need to speak to Drs. Alice Fornari and Maria Santos as they are responsible for the grading process in the clerkship. Based on this conversation I feel that I need to give you additional supporting information.

- The Community Project (30%) is never conducted alone. Due to circumstances of student selection of projects. Michael did his entire project alone. This was a very large undertaking and he assumed complete responsibility and did an outstanding job. As a Sabbath observer any additional work expected could not be done or accomplished on observant days. Based on this experience he planned on continuing this work with me for his Scholar's Project.
- The Family Medicine exam has **no pass or fail grade**. It is a **raw score** and he immediately was concerned with his performance based on the limited time he had to prepare because of the project demands and being not partnered with another student.
- In addition, the Rosh Hashanah holiday occurred on the last week of his rotation and the 2 days prior to the Family Medicine exam Michael was observing the holiday and did not have the time to prepare until after sundown on Wednesday, October 5, with the exam being given on Thursday, October 6 at 8AM.
- His high pass grade was duly deserved based on the composite scores of all criteria used in the clerkship to support final grades.

Nature

Page 1 of 1

From: "Elizabeth Lee-Rey" <eleerey@aeacom.yu.edu>  
To: <lcruz@aeacom.yu.edu>  
Subject: Michael Tyberg

jimmy- here's my note. thank you for the opportunity for speaking to the committee. liz

**Elizabeth Lee-Rey, M.D., M.P.H.**

Assistant Professor of Family and Social Medicine

Co-Director, Hispanic Center of Excellence

Co-Director, Bronx Science and Health Opportunities Partnership

Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University

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ATTACHMENT

1-9  
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Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University

Department of Family and Social Medicine

(718) 430-2154 Office  
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(718) 430-8616 Fax

December 16, 2005

James David, MD  
Associate Dean of Student affairs  
Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
1300 Morris Park Avenue  
Bronx, New York 10461

Dear Dr. David:

I am writing to you on behalf of Michael Tyberg, a student in the third year class. I understand Michael recently failed the Step 1 exam by a narrow margin. Having served on the Committee on Student Promotions and Professional Standards, I am aware of the difficult decisions facing the committee regarding dismissal and fair application of AECOM's guidelines. However, I am advocating that Michael be given the opportunity to complete his MD degree at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He has stellar qualities as a clinician and as a member of the health care team and I believe he will become a remarkably skilled physician.

I supervised Michael during his Family Medicine clerkship in September 2005, working with him closely during quite a few of my patient care sessions, and having the opportunity to talk at some length about personal and professional matters. Among the many bright, eager and caring AECOM students we work with in our practice, Michael stood out for his attentiveness and consideration of patient well-being and comfort; for his keen insight into the context of patients' symptoms and medical problems; for his eagerness to learn and to read about diagnostic and treatment issues; and for his ability to reason and apply his knowledge. Michael was a favorite of patients, medical support staff, and attending physicians alike; in fact patients still inquire about him. Michael has two key qualities that contribute to his reputation: kindness and curiosity. He is unfailingly kind and courteous to everyone, especially patients, and he is intensely interested in them. This interest is manifested in his listening and interviewing skills and his ability to engage patients in thinking more actively about their health.

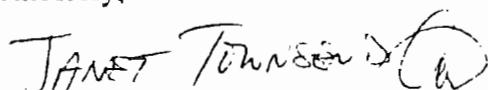
Mailing Address:  
Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
Department of Family and Social Medicine  
Jack and Pearl Rosack Campus  
1300 Morris Park Avenue  
Mazer Building Room 100  
Bronx, New York 10461

ATTACHMENT  
#1-2

Michael earned a high pass in the rotation. His history taking skills were excellent, often uncovering hidden dimensions of patients' experience as well as important details regarding their medical problems. He had a very good fund of knowledge, which he applied well. He had very good patient care skills and worked diligently and effectively with the health center staff. He demonstrated consistency and professionalism in carrying out the responsibilities of the clerkship. His honesty and trustworthiness were consistently evident, including seeking and responding to feedback. Michael also independently conducted a well-received COPC community mapping project at our health center.

I would be very sad should Michael not be able to complete his degree at Albert Einstein, and think that it would be a loss for the school. Michael Tyberg has the character and the talents to become an accomplished clinician and the sort of physician that will help restore and maintain the trust of individual patients and the public. I would appreciate if you would convey my input to the members of the Committee on Student Promotions and Professional Standards for their deliberation. Please do not hesitate to call on me for further information. I would also be happy to assist in any way deemed appropriate, should Michael be permitted to continue his studies here.

Sincerely,



Janet M. Townsend, MD  
Associate Professor of Clinical Family Medicine  
Director of Faculty Development  
Co-Director, Division of Education  
Department of Family and Social Medicine

ATTACHMENT  
# 7-2



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times" a quote so renowned that it borders on cliché. Yet how aptly those words evoke the history that provoked my invitation to stand before this respected committee. The experiences in that history have left indelible marks, just as we all are changed by our choices. I have entered single and am now married to a devoted wife and we have been blessed with a beautiful baby boy. Only four years past I entered the doors of this school a blank slate waiting to be imprinted with a wealth of knowledge that this school had to offer. The training imparted to my classmates and I changed us from being receivers into givers of health and hope. It has brought reality to our aspirations of making a difference. Hindsight has endowed me with the clarity to understand how there were times that I was receptive to learning and there were times that my decisions did not allow me to be a good student. A book has been written detailing the triumphs and failures of my history here. I bare the pages of this book every time that I appear before this committee and it is ultimately your decision that writes the next chapter. We cannot change what has been written in the past, but together we can make the decisions that write a bright future.

Let us turn the pages back to the first chapter. It starts with a young man bright eyed and ecstatic at going to the school of his dreams; his first choice of medical schools. He was introduced to a warm community that welcomed him with open arms. He formed the first threads of strong bonds of friendships that would last a lifetime. As the pages flip in succession this story relates a student that performed poorly on his exams, failed his exams, and so to speak used quicksand to build the foundation of his future success. He could build a tower of exemplary grades, cultivate in his superiors a sense of confidence in his abilities, and watch the edifice, and his dreams along with it, crumble in a heap of rubble at a moments notice.

This however is not just a book, rather it is real life and that student stands before you today to see if this Committee will support him by allowing him a new construction site or will they leave him kicking the dust of the rubble off his shoes. The commitment that I have to Albert Einstein College of Medicine is rooted deeper than my own personal experiences here. I believe in the work of this school and I love the product that this school creates. Doctors who are real people that put themselves in the shoes of their patients. Doctors who respect the beliefs of their patients because they are taught in an environment that respects their own beliefs. I see these qualities in my friends that I study, live, and pray with and I hope to emulate and learn from many of their qualities. The full support of this committee will let me live that commitment and become the excellence in medicine that you inculcate into your students.

In fact though, my own personal experiences have intensified the deep loyalty that I regard for this school. In my first year here I failed numerous exams and during that year the make-up examinations that I was obliged to take precluded me from using any time of midwinter vacation or spring vacation as time off. I did not feel sorry for myself, after all, I was eating the meal that I had prepared and I simply did not work hard enough to earn the luxury of a break. Nonetheless, think of what that does to the psyche. Think back to the pressures of when you were in medical school and imagine not being afforded a time-out. What does that do to a person?

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# 1-4

The next year, my second year of medical school, was different in that I was decelerated and my performance improved. That year I failed the biochemistry make-up course and appeared before this committee. The regret I feel for not taking every precaution to ensure my future success at the school that I love is enormous. Obviously this committee felt that I needed a serious wake-up call and only after appealing the first decision was I granted the privilege of continuing my education here. There came a warning, however, that there was no more room for error. Any leeway provided to other students would not be afforded to me. The luxury of a low pass would also not be tolerated and would instigate another invitation to a committee meeting. Taking a long hard look at myself I had to admit that I was scared. How would I hold up to such accountability? The upcoming year would be extremely demanding and on what past success could I even believe in myself that I was capable of those demands? That level of pressure is remarkable, but you gave me another chance and for that I was very grateful. Still it is a fascinating exercise to place yourselves temporarily in my shoes and meditate on the emotional and psychological ramifications of this responsibility. Furthermore all my friends that I began school with, close friends that danced at my wedding, were starting their rotations and moving ahead of my pace. Again the question is raised, what does that do to a person?

At the start of my third year here I wanted nothing more than to earn the good faith that was granted to me by this committee. Moving on campus, using tutors for every course, scheduling study partners, spending endless hours in the library, and making my presence at every lecture as critical as my morning coffee was the regular baseline of activity that your message had pushed through. Truly, though, what had lasting consequences and was the stick used to measure me were my good test results. By virtue of passing scores, that year stands as a reliable indication of a strong knowledge base. That year is what gives me the courage to ask that I may continue learning the art of medicine in this great school. That year instilled in me the trait of functioning productively under pressure. The pressure of walking towards the bulletin board on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor Belfer building after each examination that was akin to a man walking into a courtroom to hear his sentencing. Thankfully, with much hard work, the words 'not guilty' resounded in Belfer many times that year. However, what type of attitude does working under those conditions engender? How does that affect a person?

The USMLE Step 1 examination is a painful subject to discuss. It was when the gravel slammed down with finality, muting out the diminishing echoes of 'guilty'. It hurts to admit the underlying cause of my failure, namely that I just did not have a comprehensive grasp of the material. This was not due to a lack of time to adequately prepare or a lack of quantity of studying during that time. I am disappointed and embarrassed that so much effort on my part did not yield results. Everyone is aware that this exam is the most challenging one that we face. The clinical vignette style questions and the time limitations are additional hurdles besides simply absorbing the large body of knowledge. I underestimated my ability to leap over these hurdles, but the real fault lay with the quality of my preparation.

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These past months I have been immured in USMLE review and have exhausted every angle to improve my grasp of the material. I attended live lectures, acquired a study partner that I still meet with, and I purchased study material better suited to a comprehensive and deep understanding of what is required. Essentially I started from scratch and with every review my understanding deepens, the material enmeshes itself tighter in my memory, and my scores on practice exams go up a notch. I do not pretend that a new impressive score on the USMLE will excuse the previous error of sitting for that exam unprepared. I made an estimation based on practice scores and time spent reviewing. That was a display of bad judgment, of not performing a thorough investigation that would leave no doubt as to my test readiness.

The aforementioned psychological question is even more pertinent now. To miss the very last exam at the brink of completing a successful year and ultimately facing the devastating decision of the committee was disheartening. It must affect ones viewpoint somehow.

When I entered Albert Einstein four years ago I believed that that this school would change me, but I am before you surprised at myself by how much I have grown, by how much I have come to learn about myself. I have seen this miraculous transformation in my friends here as well. This place is magic; it is a cocoon that envelops us and makes us beautiful when we spread our wings for the first time. These past four years I have been obligated to renew myself repeatedly. At times this was difficult, but there was a secret ingredient. This ingredient was enhanced with every challenge and exhibited a stronger effect on the dish. I chose Albert Einstein because I love the ideals, values, and education that it stands for. That love has grown every time that I infused myself with a renewed vitality to face an exam again. It entwined itself in my essence when I see my fellow students graduate, when I see the goal realized in the friends that I care so deeply for. Wendell Phillips once said, "The best education in the world is that got by struggling to get a living." I would like to suggest that perhaps the best education in the world is really that got by struggling to get an education! Psychologically the dedication and perseverance has nurtured a loyalty to this college and to medicine that will never die. I believe in recognizing the good that is done for you and returning the favor. That is why I love creating medical presentations, that is why I have aspirations to write a book, and that is why I still tutor students in the college I graduated from for free. The place we grow up in becomes a part of us and I will make every sacrifice to never let that part of me go.

Now I am faced with a dilemma when I make future guarantees to this committee. Yes, I will make every sacrifice to thrive here, but how can I make promises that I cannot keep. When I stood before this committee a year past I made those promises and meant them. I do not have thechutzpah or the stupidity to say now, "No more failure!" even though I feel an iron resolve never to do so. Even though I would sooner step on ground glass then step into an examination without practically incontrovertible proof of my knowledge. Given the precarious situation that I brought upon myself with my first year here, precautions have become necessary. One failure for me does not carry the same weight as one failure of a student with a clean slate. Practically I will make a schedule

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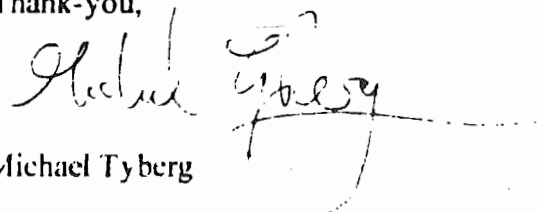
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that will allow me extra time of shelf review before beginning the rotation. This approach will maximize my chances of passing every shelf and hopefully give me the success that I know that each and every one of you would prefer to give me. Notwithstanding my resolve, we do not know what the future holds, and I accept the consequences of that uncertainty. I do not regret the decision that I made to stay here the past four years and I will never regret staying longer.

The experiences that I have had at Einstein, my successes and failures have helped me become who I am today. It is fitting that at this school, with the namesake it carries, is where I have met such challenges. Every year at orientation the same speech is given. It tells of the challenges that Albert Einstein faced. His difficulties at school and his challenges in finding and keeping a job. Would Albert choose not to believe in me the same way that no one believed in him? He gave more than just his name to this school, he gave his legacy. We decorate our halls with his inspiration, but of what worth is it if we do not carry his message in our hearts. Members of the committee, I do not even reach the toes of the greatness of our founder. I am but a medical student who is deeply mired in the mistakes of his past. But I believe in the life that Albert lived and the wisdom he imparted to us. Hence, I stand before you resolute in my decision to heal those that want in health. My passion for medicine has faced tough challenges that threatened to extinguish its flames. A strong wind can blow out a fire or can fan it. This school, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is a school for those who stay loyal to what they know is true in their hearts and keep the fire alive, a school for a man like myself who nursed those fires so that they still blaze today. Yes I am asking you for another chance, the opportunity to complete here what I have started four years past. The opportunity to continue to drink from the well of knowledge that you have opened for me. Still, just as importantly I am imploring you to be inspired by the life of the man who in 1945 radically changed the course of the world by building the tools of destruction. The man who, in 1955, changed the world yet again by building the tools of life. Let us celebrate our 50 years by remembering that we are a community of students, faculty and administrators who represent the ideals of a man who believed in imagination more than knowledge. A man who said that the aim (of education) must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals who, however, can see in the service to the community their highest life achievement.

Thank-you,



Michael Tyberg

ATTACHMENT

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COMMITTEE ON STUDENT PROMOTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

TO: Members, Committee on Student Promotions and Professional Standards

FROM: N Katz, MD (Chair) *U*  
J David, MD *J*

DATE: March 27, 2006

Re: Minutes of March 27, 2006 Meeting

Present: A Cajagas, L. Cruz, J. David, M. Delgado, A Fleckman, P Grossman, R. Hays,  
N. Juthani, N. Katz, S. Lomonaco, M. Risley, J. Rubinstein, N. Soto, H. Steinman,  
S. Switzer, M. Witt

Excused: C. Cimino

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**Michael Tyberg**

The Committee reviewed Michael's academic record and prior communications with the Committee. He had been recommended for dismissal some months ago and returned to appeal this to the Committee.

He read an elaborate written statement (attached) and responded to questions from the membership. Although not once mentioned in his written statement, he reported that he is in "marriage counseling" and that the marriage counselor recently (in Feb 2006) recommended that Michael consult with a psychiatrist. Michael insisted that this was not entirely in response to his pending Committee appearance, but was both for personal as well as school-related concerns. He announced, rather unexpectedly, that he had a letter from this psychiatrist - unopened - in his car. Michael offered to retrieve the letter for the Committee's review. After some back and forth as to the origin and intention of this letter, a discussion in which Michael participated, he was asked to bring the letter back to the Committee room.

Dr. David opened the sealed letter, which was addressed to Michael on the envelope, but which bore the salutation, "To Whom It May Concern." A copy of the letter is attached to these minutes.

As Michael had said, the letter indicated that he had been to the office Dr. Shalom Feinberg, who Michael described as a "psychopharmacologist." It provided two psychiatric diagnoses: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified and a second diagnosis of Anxiety Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified. Both visits took place in late February, a week apart, and his third visit was slated for tomorrow, 28 Mar 2006. He reported being started on Concerta (a low

dose – I didn't react") at his first visit which was increased at his second visit, a week later. Michael reported that, "I can now study like other people do."

Michael acknowledged that this letter that was held in reserve in his parked car did not constitute a request for accommodations or similar. He acknowledged that he understood the by-laws and related policies do not encourage requests for retroactive leniency or dispensation "after the fact" of academic failures. When pressed as to the story behind this surprise letter and information – none of which appeared in his written statement nor was it appended to same – Michael reported that it was not his own idea to obtain this consultation nor his own idea to obtain this letter.

When asked what he might do, should the Committee and then the Dean uphold the recommendation on the table, i.e., dismissal – he indicated clearly his intent to continue with his medical training, at another school, if necessary.

After being escorted to the waiting area outside of the Committee meeting room (by Dr. David), where his wife was waiting, he raised (for the first time) that he might want his wife to speak directly to the Committee. He asked for advice. Dr. David suggested that the Committee's questions revolved primarily about his exam performance record, a subject less appropriate for discussion with a spouse. After some minutes – with the Committee going forward inside the meeting room – the matter was dropped by Michael. He was understandably concerned as to how he had been received by the Committee, and teetered on the temptation to send his wife in to "discuss my exams."

After discussion, the Committee voted to uphold the prior recommendation that Michael be recommended for dismissal: 6 in favor, 2 opposed.

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